



POETRY IN MOTION

Overview: In this activity, students create their own poetry about San Francisco Bay wetlands.

Content Standards Correlations: Language Arts, p. 311

Grades: K-2, 3-6

Key Concepts:

People often use poetry to express feelings about nature. It has long inspired poets and will be inspiring to students.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

Grades: K-2

- as a class create an extension to "Wetland Protectors".

Grades: 3-6

- translate their experience into a poem about their field trip to the San Francisco Bay wetlands

Materials:

- paper and pencils

Time:

Grades: K-2

20 minutes

Grades: 3-6

45 minutes



California Poppy

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Forms of Poetry

Free verse

Free flow of thoughts about an overview of the field trip, a specific moment, habitat or creature. Sometimes reads as a brief story.

Sunset

Rays reach beam-like across the sunlight Bay
to touch the tips of pickleweed that sparkle.
Cordgrass fronds sway, competing hungrily
to catch each radiant spark.

Then, each ray retreats
gathers back into its center,
folds upon itself
and instantly is gone..

Haiku

Originated by the Japanese, haiku is usually on the topic of nature and consists of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables each

The fish swam by me
Nothing left in the shimmer
My heart beat faster

Cinquain

Cinquain is derived from the French and Spanish words for five. Cinquain poems are always five lines long and have the following structure:

- (1) The first line is the title line is the title in two syllables (or two words):
- (2) The second line is a description of the title in four syllables (or words):
- (3) The third line is a description of the action in six syllables (or words):
- (4) The fourth line is a description of a feeling in eight syllables (or words):
- (5) The fifth line is another word for the title in two syllables (or words).

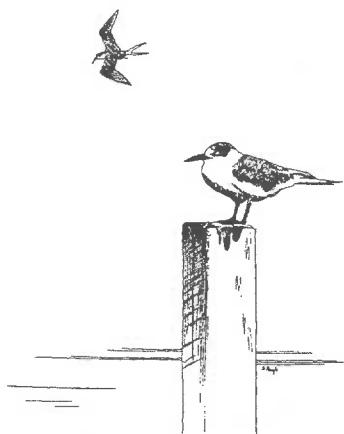
Osprey
Fishing eagle
Moves above dark water
With graceful strength it finds its meal
Seeker

Diamante

Diamante is a poem shaped in the form of a diamond. It can be used to show that words are related through shades of meaning from one extreme to an opposite extreme, following a pattern of parts of speech like this:

Noun
adjective, adjective
participle, participle, participle
noun, noun, noun, noun
participle, participle, participle
adjective, adjective
Noun

Stream
small, clear
Rippling, moving, growing
Life, plants, animals, people
Rushing, sustaining, cleansing
Connected, universal
Water



TEACHING METHOD

(Grades K-2)

Read

"I will read the poem: "Wetland Protectors". It is about the plants and animals that live in the Bay and how we can help to protect their habitat. After I read the poem, together we will create another verse to the poem from information you gained on your field trip to the Refuge."

Do

Read the poem "Wetland Protectors"

Read

"Wetlands are precious and are becoming more rare
We've got to protect them, there's no time to spare.

Refrain:

*"So remember, be smart, use the brain in your head
Protect all the wetlands, and the whole watershed.*

"Water from all different habitats flows into the Bay
We all want a clean Bay, so keep pollution away.

"Refrain

"Help keep toxins out of sinks and drains
All it takes is knowledge, and a little of brains.

"Refrain

"Don't throw your trash away like it's useless or dead
Reduce, reuse, and recycle instead.

"Refrain

"Birds have adaptations that help them survive
Special beaks and neat feet help keep them alive.

"Refrain

"Shorebirds are super, and they're easy to spot
They feed in the Bay because it's a good place to stop.

"Refrain

"The salt marsh is a great place to explore and have fun
But this unique habitat requires protection."

Ask

? **What were your favorite words in the poem?** (This focuses students' attention on language.)

Do

Brain storm ideas to add another verse to "Wetland Protectors" As a class create the verse and recite it with the refrain. Students can recite the refrain of the poem while the teacher recites the verses for another class or at an assembly.

(Grades 3-6)

Read

"From your experiences on the field trip to the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge you will write a poem."

Do

Go over with the students techniques for Creating Poetry:

- In the beginning of the activity let students know how the time will be divided; lead-in time, writing time and reading time and if all of this will happen in one or more sessions.
- Give students options when writing poetry, free form, rhyming, or other poetic forms.
- Advise students to write like they talk.
- Encourage students to close their eyes, think about and visualize their field trip experience and let the poem develop in their mind's eye.
- When they begin to write, they should try to let the thoughts just flow from their heads and onto the paper without thinking about them too much.
- After they have their thoughts on paper they can decide which form of poetry to use: Free Verse Rhyming, Haiku, Cinquain, or Diamante.
- Decide on how the reading of the poems should

proceed with your students; some students may read their own; others may want you to read their poem. Be sensitive to their needs.

Do

Go over the different forms of poetry with the students: Free verse, Rhyming (Wetland Protectors), Haiku, Cinquain, or Diamante.

Read

"To inspire you about the value of the rivers, mountains, lakes and oceans of the world I will read "If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter" before you begin writing your poetry."

Do

Read "If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter"

Do

The students will create poetry inspired by the weather, sounds, sights and actions from their field trip to the wetlands. To encourage recall of their experience, you may play a tape of the sounds of a bay habitat. Such tapes can be purchased at bookstores, music stores, or nature stores, or borrowed from libraries.

If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it. People would walk around it, marvelling at its big pools of water, its little pools of water and the water flowing between the pools. People would marvel at the bumps on it, and the holes in it, and they would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas. The people would marvel at all the creatures walking around the surface of the ball, and at the creatures in the water. The people would declare it as sacred because it was the only one, and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the greatest wonder known, and people would come to pray to it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know beauty and to wonder how it could be. People would love it, and defend it with their lives because they would somehow know that their lives, their own roundness, could be nothing without it. If the Earth were only a few feet

**Friends of the Earth
New Zealand**

Extensions

The poetry can be used as part of a display, or your class could give a reading of poetry to help promote community awareness about the value of wetlands.

You can become involved with the River of Words Project!

The River of Words is a California based 501(c)(3) non profit organization. Each year River of Words in conjunction with the Library of Congress Center for the Book, hosts an international environmental poetry and art contest with the theme of watersheds. This project nurtures respect and understanding of the natural world by encouraging children to learn their "ecological address" and to describe through poetry and art their own "place in space." The project hopes to foster responsibility, imagination and action in young people and to publicly acknowledge their creativity and concerns. River of Words offers training for teachers, librarians, agencies, grassroot organizations, and the community, to help incorporate nature exploration and the arts into their curriculum and programs.

Thousands of American schoolchildren in K through 12th grade have participated in River of Words, drawn by the challenge of exploring and interpreting their local watersheds through the arts. Each year 100 poems and artworks are selected as finalists. 8 National Grand Prize winners (4 in poetry and 4 in art) and one international winner will be chosen to go to Washington, D.C. with their parents, where they will be honored at an award ceremony at The Library of Congress.

River of Words Contest, P.O. Box 4000-J, Berkeley, CA, 94704, 510-548-7636, fax 510-548-2095.

Internet: <http://www.riverofwords.org> email: info@riverofwords.org

